DAFIS NEWS

F rom the D irector's Office...

Jack Fattes, B-30

NEW FINANCIAL SYSTEMS POLICY OUTLINED

The OST Office of Financial Management, in the Office of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Chief Financial Officer, has outlined a draft policy for the development, operation and maintenance of

Department will have integrated financial system...

financial systems in the Department. The new policy directs that the Department will have an integrated financial system, as required by OMB Circular A-127, Financial Management Systems, but will be based on a component system concept of feeder, core, and reporting systems. This concept is in contrast to the way in which the present DOT accounting system, DAFIS, was developed and implemented. As a highly centralized system, DAFIS was polished and modified to meet most of the essential and unique needs of DOT's operating administrations. In 1994, the DOT Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) Council approved a Financial Management (FM) Strategic Plan. Financial managers recognized that, despite establishing a single, integrated accounting system, they were challenged to do "more with less" and at the same time provide better and more reliable information, more quickly and in more flexible ways.
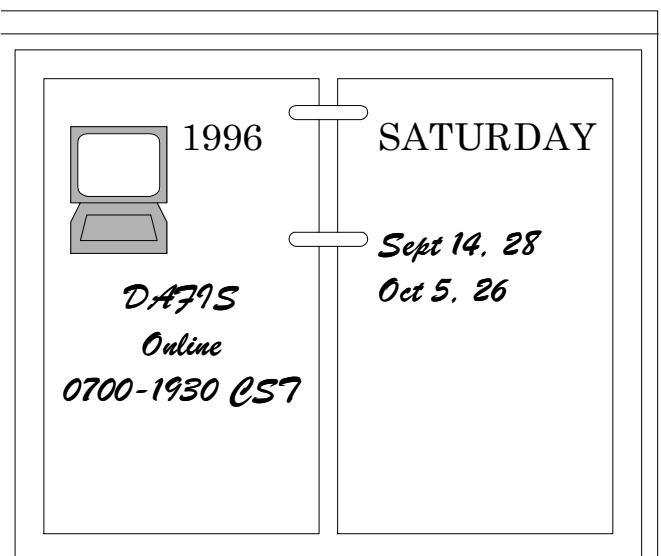
In 1995, the CFO Council and FM community endorsed a new approach to financial management operations and in effect a new financial systems environment. Through user-friendly feeder and reporting systems, the customer will be the focal point for entering data into the system and having direct access to his/her financial data from the system. This fundamental shift supports a more paperless environment, capturing data once at the source, less FM staff involvement, and faster response to customer information needs.

A description of and policies related to the three component system concept follow:
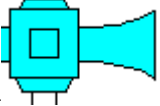
Feeder Systems - Generally, these are single purpose FM systems that are based on automating a highly regulated activity. Some examples include budget, procurement, payroll, personnel, travel, small purchases, grants, accounts receivable, etc. Necessary attributes of feeder systems include single source data entry; electronic routing and approval, if applicable; electronic interactive interfaces between the feeder and core systems; electronic commerce capabilities, if applicable; Year 2000 compliancy; meeting core system input standards; and the ability to operate on "standard" desktop platforms and operating systems. Audit trails, internal controls, and security are also necessary parts of feeder systems but only at the appropriate level.

As a matter of policy, feeder systems should acquire feeder (subsidiary) systems software or services which can provide personnel, productivity and quality gains that capture detail transaction data and periodically record summarized data in the core financial system. In general, departmental entities should buy feeder

1996   SATURDAY

DAFIS
Online
0700-1930 CST

Sept 14, 28
Oct 5, 26

September 1996

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		DAFIS Available Normal Hours				
8	9 I-H Rpts Print Reg 9: New Approp Code Lim on R07, RT1, R06 Cutoff	10	11	12	13	14 DAFIS Online 0700-1930 CST IOTV Initiation Cutoff
		DAFIS Available Normal Hours				
15	16 I-H Rpts Print	17	18	19	20 Complete IOTV Acceptance	21 DAFIS Not Avbl - PP20 Processing
		DAFIS Available Normal Hours				
22 DAFIS Not Avbl - PP20 Processing	23 I-H Rpts Print RMBC Monthly Process	24	25 Canceled Approps Cutoff	26	27	▼28 DAFIS Online 0700-1930 CST
		DAFIS Available Normal Hours				
29	30 C02 Update Cutoff I-H Rpts Print DAFIS Availa...					

NOW HEAR THIS--- FY96 Yearend Closing Instructions on Internet! See Page 3 for details!

October 1996

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Prelim Trial Balance	4	5 DAFIS Online 0700-1930 CST Load Rec Chg Masters
		DAFIS Available Normal Hours				
		Grace Period				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		VEM available during yearend (Mon-Sat 0500-2400 CDT)				
13	14 Columbus Day Holiday	15	16	17 DAFIS Online after	18	19
		VEM available during yearend (Mon..		Billing Preview		
		Pre-Clos TB avbl/download to FSM Oct 15-1100 CDT Oct 21				
20	21 Pre-Clos TB av.	22	23	24 Process Sep Bills Rec Chg Accruals on DT40	25 Canceled Approps Cutoff Rec Chg Auto Disb Process Ready	26 DAFIS Online 0700-1930 CST
		Billing Preview				
		Post-Clos TB avbl/download to FSM 1300 CDT Oct 21- 31				
27	28	29	30	31		
		Post-Clos TB avbl/download to FSM 1300 CDT Oct 21- 31				

FY96 YEAREND SCHEDULE

Great DAFIS Info at your fingertips!

Remember you can access DAFIS information on the Internet! Visit the Office of Financial Services (AMZ) web site at http://www.amz.jccbi.gov and click on AMZ-2B or AMZ-200 to get the DAFIS Proforma, the DAFIS MIR/DW User Guide, read the NEWS, or other helpful documents such as the FY96 yearend closing letter and instructions.

The following information box will appear in each edition of the DAFIS NEWS. It contains the web site address as well as other information about the newsletter.◆

ASK DAFIS NEWS

Q: A   s of the third quarter of FY96, the SF133 format changed. Can I still use the Financial Statement Module to produce the SF133?

A: No. The Financial Statement Fomula no longer generates the SF133 in accordance with OMB Circular A-34 issued December 1995 and TFM Transmittal Letter No. S2-96-02 issued April 1996. However, you may still download DAFIS data and use the module to generate trial balances to help you

If you have a question for the "Ask DAFIS NEWS" column, please write to the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, Attn: DAFIS NEWS (AMZ-2B), P. O. Box 25082, Oklahoma City, OK 73125. Fax number is

DAFIS NEWS

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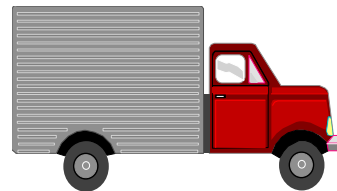Phone (405) 954-3544
FAX (405) 954-4380
Web Site http://www.amz.jccbi.gov/amz2b/amz2b.htm

MOVING?

ADDRESS CHANGED ?

Be sure to let us know your new address. We want to keep your issues of the NEWS coming without delay. Also, updating your address will ensure any other mailings you receive from DAFIS Operations & Training get to the correct destination. Just call (405) 954-3544 or ccmail Margie Alabaster, AMZ-2B.◆

VEM Test & Acceptance a Success

...Rosemary Redmond, VEM Team, AMZ-200

A successful Voucher Examination Module (VEM Windows) Test & Acceptance (T&A) was held at MMAC in Oklahoma City July 29 through August 2, 1996. Representatives from FAA, MARAD, FTA, USCG, FHWA, and OST attended the week-long test. The test was led by AMZ-200, AMI-500 and AMZ-2B. Brenda Smith, assisted by Carrie Hug, (both of SVC-161) was there as the project manager. Evelyn Brown and Herb Walker of B-30 also attended.

Participants in the VEM Windows T&A will recognize the screen below from one of the T&A test sessions. This is the optional VEM Commitment Update screen for on-line entry of purchase requests. At this point a third line item may be added by clicking on one of the lines previously entered or the commitment may be balanced by clicking on the balance scales. The point and click features of VEM Windows make it easy to enter a commitment.

Although entering a commitment, obligation, receipt or invoice is easy in a windows environment, VEM Windows is designed to accept procurement information primarily through a standard interface. The VEM Windows user will most likely enter an invoice against source data captured in the procurement system. In this respect VEM Windows serves as the link between procurement and DAFIS accounting. ◆

Record Added

(Continued from page 1)

system software or services from outside vendors or other government units unless the OST Director of Financial Management agrees that there is a clear, demonstrated comparative advantage in developing and/or maintaining such systems, or that such systems achieve visible economies when integrated into a mission oriented activity.

We will support the acquisition of systems/services that allow us to easily shift from one feeder system to another, are more cost effective and easily upgradeable.

Core System - From the DOT perspective the core system should primarily meet departmental needs. Rather than being all things to all DOT organizations, the DOT core system will carry out summary data functions such as maintaining the general ledger, financial statement preparation, all central agency financial reports, etc. It may also support specialized activity functions, if determined necessary. However, the core system will not replicate functions or processes that are contained in feeder systems.

Inherent in this feeder, core, reporting systems concept are standards, in particular data standards, for passing and updating core system data files and the standard general ledger account information. The departmental core system will be integrated with the specialized financial feeder systems and appropriate data transfers from and to remote systems.

Reporting Systems - These type systems can produce an array of reports from simple data for use by program and administrative staff to quite sophisticated displays of data for program managers and senior agency officials. Although generally associated with both feeder and core systems, DOT's integrated financial system will support separate reporting systems that have capabilities to access, summarize, format, and graph financial and other data to meet the varying needs of multiple users. The preferred option will be to acquire off-the-shelf software for reporting systems. DOT organizations should use such capability in conjunction with or separate from feeder or core systems rather than investing in internal reporting development efforts.

Key drivers of our financial system are the business processes they support. Up front streamlining and reassessment of the need for FM business processes will occur prior to buying or building software or services to reduce the amount of resources expended to develop and operate systems, to reduce operational costs and to ensure that processes are as efficient as possible. To this end, when systems (feeder, core, reporting) are upgraded or replaced, it will not be assumed that the old system will be maintained forever (although adequate time will be provided for switching to the new system) or that the new system will contain the complete set of functions of the old system. Those customers requiring specialized functionality will be responsible for developing or procuring appropriate solutions.

The pertinent question at this point is who is in charge of implementing this new policy. A short answer is everyone. A longer answer is the subject of the next newsletter article. However, because the Chief Financial Officer has statutory responsibility for financial systems as outlined in the CFO Act of 1990, the OST Director of Financial Management currently sponsors and is the "purse" for DAFIS development and operations with advice and counsel from the Financial Management Committee.

Questions, comments, or other remarks about this policy should be directed to your FMC member or to Jack Fattes in the OST Office of Financial Management (B-30). He can be reached by DOT e-mail, voice mail (202-366-5905) or internet (jfattes@postmaster2.dot.gov). ◆
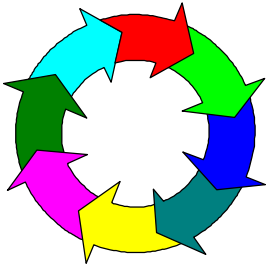
OKC TEAM DAFIS EMBRACES INTERNAL PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PART II

Steve Dugan, IPI, AMI-500

"At Superior Designs we greatly value you our customer. We strive to produce the highest quality products possible." I am sure you have heard those words before. I have read and seen similar statements myself, and to be quite frank, the words went right past me. During my career I have worked with what I consider some very nice people, but I can honestly say that since joining the DAFIS Team I have been exposed to the nicest and most dedicated people ever! From the AMI management through all of the team members, YOU our customers are our prime consideration.

Team DAFIS has made "quality" and "customer satisfaction" our #1 priority. We are committed to producing the very best product for you. Quality and efficiency, the standards that DAFIS has held high from its inception, are the driving forces behind this new DAFIS Internal Process Improvement (IPI) methodology.

In the last issue (June 1996) of the DAFIS NEWS we covered the benefits of IPI. In this and following issues I would like to describe the different phases of the IPI process.

Maturity Levels

IPI provides a rating system whereby software organizations can be rated, measured and tracked. This rating system is known as "Maturity Levels". Maturity Levels consist of five well-defined ratings. Level one is the initial level progressing through to level five being the most mature level. Each level builds a foundation for succeeding levels. DAFIS along with over 96% of the software organizations in the world are rated as Level 1.   Only two organizations world-wide are rated as "Level 5". Currently, DAFIS is satisfying a great deal of the requirements for a Level 2 organization, and we are ahead of the game in quite a few areas.

The principal behind a Level 2 is to plan and manage new and established projects based on successes from earlier similar projects, by the means of documentation and established procedures. That is why Level 2 is known as the repeatable level.

What does a Level 2 organization look like?
   The organization:
        *makes realistic project commitments based on results of previous projects
        *tracks costs, schedules, and functionality
        *identifies commitment problems as they arise
        *creates timelines for each phase of its projects
        *controls the integrity of the product
        *defines and enforces standards
        *defines, documents, measures, enforces, and improves the processes used to develop projects

Key Process Areas (KPAs)

Maturity Levels are divided into components known as Key Process Areas (KPAs). KPAs are specific groups of items containing requirements that are necessary to satisfy each maturity level. An organization must fulfill all of the KPA requirements for a maturity level before it can progress to the next level.

The six KPAs identified in Level 2 are:
     *Requirements Management
     *Project Planning
     *Project Tracking and Oversight
     *Subcontract Management
     *Quality Assurance
     *Configuration Management

IPI is not a short term project. It is a continuous process improvement based on many small progressive improvements rather than a large momentous change. You might be able to compare it to constructing a building. The construction workers progress through several building phases (foundation, framing, roofing, brick work) and install many items (lumber, electrical units, piping, bricks) before a building is completed.   As each phase is completed they progress to the next phase until the building is entirely complete. The building phases can be equated to maturity levels and the installation of building items can be equated to the requirements or KPAs. By the way, even after the building is completed there are always improvements to be made: covered swimming pool, hot tub, BMW in the driveway, etc.

In upcoming issues of the DAFIS News we will explore